As is consistent with the values and beliefs of our religion, the Covenant affirms our belief in the spiritual and social wisdom of peace in the world. We aspire to stand in fellowship with the people of all religions, cultures, and ethnicities in our shared desire for peace. We do this for the sake of our shared love of the Earth and all living things that dwell upon it.
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS due at Litha

Litha renewals are due on June 21, 2020. The Drop-dead date is July 1, 2020 after which your membership will lapse and you will need to reapply. Renewal forms are emailed to the email address on file from your last renewal. If you have NOT received this form, please contact the National Membership Officer immediately (membership@cog.org).

CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL:
- Circle Athenaem

CHAMISA LOCAL COUNCIL:
- Circle of the Winter Moon
- Coven of the Silver Moon

EVERGLADES MOON LOCAL COUNCIL:
- Dragonwhisper Coven
- Spiraling Heart Coven
- Lord Gwydion

HILLS AND RIVERS LOCAL COUNCIL:
- Circle of Diana
- Grove of the Ancient River

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL:
- Circle of the Wild Wood

TOUCHSTONE LOCAL COUNCIL: NONE

NATIONAL COVENS:
- Temple of the Amethyst Moon

NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:
- Frodo
- Susannah Faith
- Lady Magdalena
- Scott Rhodes

FRIENDS OF COG: NONE

OUR GOVERNING BOARD

- National First Officer – Lord Verderius
- National Purse Warden - Manny
- Calafia Representative – Catherine
- Chamisa – Ryan C.
- Everglades Moon – Raven
- Hills & Rivers – Lady Annabelle
- Northern California – Macha
- Orange County – Janine
- Southern California – Lady Mariah
- Texas – Orin
- Touchstone – Lord Soec
- National Covens – Open
- National Individual Members – Open

LETTER FROM THE FIRST OFFICER

Strengthening salutations dear CoG Members,

As the seasons unfold, one into another, we are reminded that everything in the world around us is in a constant state of change. We too must adapt to the changes we are seeing in our daily world. Our mother Earth holds the key to the prerequisite of change. With that said, we too must come to terms with accepting the varying changes in our lives and in the way we go about doing things.

We all know that difficult times ~ call for difficult measures... On April 12th the National Officers and the Governing Board Reps met for one of our more solemn and difficult meetings to discuss the need for change this year in the way the Covenant does business. The Covid-19 virus is here and a viable threat to everyone’s health and our way of life. We acknowledge that this virus will not be going away anytime in the near future. For the safety, protection and wellbeing of all members of the Covenant, we have collectively decided to cancel our in-person Grand Council / Merry Meet this August of 2020 in Santa Ana, California.

We firmly believe there is a vital need to host this year’s Grand Council proceedings “Virtually” so that all participating members remain safe and healthy for this Grand Council and future gatherings, once this global pandemic has passed. However, this task poses many challenges for all of us, as we work to find a suitable solution that will properly meet the needs of the Covenant members to attend and participate in the “virtual” Grand Council meeting.

I will be working closely with the National Officers and Governing Board Reps in this process, as we set plans and inform the membership of how we propose to host this year’s Grand Council meeting and possibly a Leadership Institute meeting as well. I will be calling on the aide of the Local Council Governing Board Reps to further assist us in this process, and to explain more
information at your future LC meetings. We will try to keep the lines of communication open and everything as transparent as possible, as we work towards the goal of hosting a productive “virtual” Grand Council.

I appreciate all members understanding that this current challenge is only temporary, and we will need to make some additional changes on achieving Quorum and other matters pertaining to Individual Member Caucuses for voting purposes, etc. Please be patient while we work through all the necessary details. Wishing you all good health and perseverance during these complex times.

Bright Beltane Blessings to everyone!!
In Dedicated Service,
Lord Verderius
National First Officer

**STATEMENT CONCERNING COVID-19**

Covenant of the Goddess (COG) recognizes the extreme circumstances we find ourselves and our families as we navigate through the concerns and challenges surrounding COVID-19 Coronavirus. Our nation and the World must alter how we live and work through the suspension of schools, working remotely, canceling major events or seeing businesses suffer as we self-quarantine our nation.

Recent announcements by the World Health Organization (WHO) designating the COVID-19 virus a global pandemic and calling for specific measures to combat the spread of the virus have had an impact on all of us. As the world tries to contain the spread of this disease, COG members are encouraged to follow local country and municipality recommendations for maintaining health personally and in your community.

During the foreseeable future through Beltane we support Local Councils and our members postponing COG-sponsored public events. This will be revisited to determine if additional time is needed.

We suggest that all in-person meetings/rituals, including small group and one-on-one meetings, should be changed to Zoom meetings when possible. If face-to-face meetings need to be held, practice social distancing of at least 6 feet.

All COG members are encouraged to follow healthy self-care practices to prevent infection and the spread of the disease.

Health care practices shared by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) include:

- Washing your hands. If you’re tired of singing Happy Birthday twice while you wash your hands, find a 20-second prayer or reflection that works for you. It takes 20 seconds to recite the first round of a loving-kindness meditation -- I do this to strengthen the community. May we all be healthy and safe; may we all be happy and peaceful; may we be free from suffering and be free from the causes of suffering; may we cultivate love and kindness for all living beings.

- Avoid close contact. Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at a higher risk of getting very sick.

- Most important of all, practice compassion. Before responding to stressful circumstances take a step back and put yourself in the other person’s situation. While we find ourselves in similar situations we are all unique human-beings and should have patience and compassion towards each other.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**
Janine Nelson
National Public Information Officer
pio@cog.org

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

**FIRST OFFICER**

**April’s report during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis**

I wish I had some uplifting news to report at this time, but we are all still dealing with the many challenges of our new way of life, since we are shut into our homes during this Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis. In truth, I have had some struggles juggling so many tasks from home recently. I have been working on crafting the two letters to go out to the National Members, Covens and Individuals, which I hope to have sent out this coming week.

Additionally, I am not sure this will be the year to worry about crafting a Consent Statement for the Covenant. The board has many challenges facing us to get us through the remainder of this year. More importantly, I feel that folks attention will be related to our survival as a people and nation as we continue to work through this global crisis. I think we should reach out to the persons who crafted the motion and ask the membership if we could table this matter until the following year. Many of us are inundated with many additional personal responsibilities at this time, and I do not believe that anyone in CoG would have an issue with us tabling this Consent Statement until Grand Council of 2021.

In closing, I hope we can all pull our talents together during this crisis and keep the momentum we have created moving forward for the Covenant. I do not see any personal travel in the forthcoming
future, since this virus is still devastating many states and larger communities.

Please stay safe during this difficult predicament we are all facing together!

In Humble Service,
Lord Verderius

Second Officer

The State of California Stay-at-Home Order issued in mid-March, originally in place until April 19th, has now been extended “indefinitely”, and most of the counties in Southern California have extended their lockdowns to May 15th or May 31st. I work for a healthcare nonprofit with decades of experience battling infectious diseases, including HIV, Ebola, Zika, TB, and others, and our Department of Medicine is of the opinion that the lockdowns will be extended through mid-June, at least. With this in mind, the officers of the Orange County Local Council met via Zoom Thursday night to discuss the cancellation of MerryMeet 2020. This is not something we take lightly, but there were certain factors to consider:

- Even if Stay-at-Home orders are no longer in place by August, the very people COG and OCLC wish to attract as potential members (young people, families with or without children) are also the people most likely to have suffered serious financial difficulties during the lockdown and be unable to afford to attend a MerryMeet
- Those same people may be reluctant to be in closed spaces with the potential for infection. After all, just because the Order is lifted, doesn’t mean that people will instantly stop becoming infected and there will suddenly be zero deaths
- A significant number of the people who regularly attend Grand Council and Leadership Institute are in “high-risk” categories
- Meanwhile, OCLC has already made significant plans related to Grand Council/MerryMeet, including booking the hotel, arranging the meal plans for attendees that choose them, printing “Save-the-Date” flyers and purchasing items for gift bags for attendees who register for the entire event
- The National Board has paid a $1,000 deposit to the hotel, which the contract states specifically is “non-refundable”, and
- The hotel contract does not have an explicit Force Majeure clause, and even if it did, California contracts with such clauses do not typically include viral pandemics.

All of these things considered, OCLC makes the following proposal to the National Board:

- That Grand Council be held August 7th and 8th by virtual meeting, in accordance with the Covenant’s bylaws and policies
- That Leadership Institute and MerryMeet 2020 be cancelled and rescheduled for August 5th-8th, 2021
- That OCLC be designated by the membership as the host for the event in 2021, and
- That I be re-elected Second Officer for the year ending October 31, 2021.

Further, should the Stay-at-Home order not be extended into August, we would have no legal basis for cancelling the event, but we should still ask for a refund as a sign of good faith, or, ask if the hotel can hold the deposit in escrow and reschedule the event for August 2021.

We invite the National Board and Governing Board Representatives to discuss this issue further.

Membership Officer

I certainly hope that this newsletter finds you all well and that you are staying safe during this trying time. Know that everyone is in my thoughts and daily intentions for health and well-being.

Beltane pre-filled renewal forms have been mailed out on April 24, 2020. Litha forms will go out on the 1st of May. I have to apologize the for the tardiness of the Beltane forms being mailed out. As such, all Beltane and Litha renewals will not be due until July 1st. If you have not received what you need, please contact me ASAP!

Applications and Renewal forms have been updated, created, and just all around spiffed up! These can be found on the member’s side of the website and when downloaded are in fillable pdf format! If you are unable to access these forms, please let me know and I will send one to you ASAP.

We are in the process of meeting with our National Individuals and Covens so that we can assist them with becoming more involved with CoG. With that in mind, there will be a letter going out so that they will be able to appoint their delegate to the Governing Board. I will be working with Thea Bristlebroom and Lord Verderius to facilitate this as well as to set up a time for our National members to chat and get to know one another via Zoom!

The migration to the new website/server continues. 2nd reminder, the AIR & DD elist (now Forums) will be opened to the Friends of CoG, and Moderators will be appointed to facilitate an appropriate atmosphere for discussions and debate
to occur within the guidelines of the existing Netiquette rules. Also note: IF YOU ARE A COVEN, YOUR MEMBERS WILL NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE FORUMS IF THEY ARE NOT ON YOUR COVEN REGISTRATIONS WITH VALID EMAILS! It is important for each and every member of CoG to be recognized and we can only do that with the proper information.

We have launched our new YouTube channel and content will be uploaded as it becomes available. Right now, there are only a few videos from other sources and a tutorial on how to fill out our renewal application. There will be additional videos on how to fill out our other forms which will be loaded in the coming weeks. SUBSCRIBE to the YouTube Channel to see when new content is uploaded!

That being said, renewals for Beltaine and Litha are due by July 1st! Your renewal is not final until BOTH the signed form and the tithe have been received. Our ByLaws require a signed statement at renewal, and the current method is the renewal form. Paying the tithe is not sufficient to keep your Membership. Just follow the YouTube Tutorial for renewing and you’ll be all set!

Please know that there is money in the Grace of the Goddess fund to assist those who might need it, and the NMO is willing to work with you for deferred tithe payments. Please do not let a temporary situation keep you from your membership in CoG! We are here to help! However, Grace of the Goddess funds may only be used for tithes and cannot be used to pay for Credential renewals.

APPLICATIONS:

Please read these statements and letters on AIR and DD! If there are any objections, please contact me at membership@cog.org

- **Friends of CoG**
  - None
- **Covens and Individuals**
  - Silver Sanctuary Coven (EMLC)
- **Welcome New Members and FoC!**
  - Scott Lamont (National)
  - Lady Avera Vreeland (National)
  - Aspen May (FoC) (National)
- **Transfer Requests**
  - None
- **Overdue/Lapsed Members** (Contact me immediately to avoid cancellation!)
  - Church of the Earth (National)
  - Coven of Bran-Faol Reannag (OCLC)
  - Greenwood Glen (OCLC)
- **Cancelled Members**
  - None

**MEMBERSHIP STATUS:**

We currently have 131 Members total, consisting of 68 Covens, and 63 Individual Members; and we now have 5 Friends of CoG. Our growth is slow and steady.

Because things can change quickly between the Newsletter publishing deadline and the actual date of publication, this may have changed by the time you read it. We have three overdue members who have not contacted me.

The following members are due at **Beltaine** and have until 7/1/2020 to renew:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roster Name</th>
<th>Local Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merlyn</td>
<td>Chamisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivianne</td>
<td>Chamisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beachfyre Coven</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Lezon</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian Dawn</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Bennett</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesod</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coven Ashesh-Hekat</td>
<td>Southern CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle of the Serpent</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree of Knowledge Coven</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following members are due at **Litha** and have until 7/1/2020 to renew:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roster Name</th>
<th>Local Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle Athenaeum</td>
<td>Calafia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle of the Winter Moon</td>
<td>Chamisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coven of the Silver Moon</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragonwhisper Coven</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiraling Heart Coven</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Gwydion</td>
<td>EMLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle of Diana</td>
<td>Hills and Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove of the Ancient River</td>
<td>Hills and Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frodo</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susannah Faith</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Magdalena</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Rhodes</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple of the Amethyst Moon</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle of the Wild Wood</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BRIGHTEST BLESSINGS,**

Dee Proctor (Lady K) NMO

**PURSEWARDEN**

**CURRENT ASSETS**

- Chase Main Account: $79,675.29
- Wells Fargo Interfaith Checking: $5,585.62
- PayPal Account: $2,044.67
- Synchrony: $ 32,693.13 (as of 2/29/2020)

**CURRENT ISSUES & PROPOSAL**

None or everything that has to do with the pandemic.
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

After Pantheacon, we determined that the new Membership Rack Card required editing. I revised the card and forwarded it to Lord Soec to be placed on the website (when able).

Based on the feedback from our first Facebook Live Event, I will be purchasing a bracket to hold a tablet or phone to video our next event. In order to post the video to our YouTube channel it should be edited and saved as MP3.

Two new items have been created. First, a Press/Media Kit has been developed that I can use at events, or provide inquiring media with information about CoG. Second, a poster has been created for members to use for events and presentations. These will be forwarded after final review (3/13/20).

My next event is 3/18/20 at Fullerton College. I have been asked to be a Guest Lecturer for the Religious Studies classes. I look forward to sharing our new Friends cards with students; along with Merry Meet promotional cards.

To Date M&O has spent:
Printing: $526.57 (includes 2 Tri-folds, Friends cards, Ribbons and Member Rack Card)
Ad: $410 (includes Reclaiming Samhain & Pantheacon Program)
Travel: $500 (estimated for Lord V and Brandon)
PCon Suite: $350 (Tree of Trad Suite)
TOTAL: $1,786.57

Our next M&O meeting is Friday, 3/13/20.

OCLC GOVERNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

The next meeting of OCLC will be 3/12/20. I will update the board with any changes.

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

Blessed Beltane to one and all! With the Stay at Home order, here in California, we’re all sort of stuck inside unable to appreciate these beautiful days the Mother has given us. If you can’t honor her in one way, choose to honor her in other ways. With my beautiful wife, we will celebrate and honor the coming of the Green Man and the Maiden. If you can get out SAFELY then do so and enjoy what the Lord and Lady are giving you these days.

As always, please send any articles, poetry or minutes to newsletter@cog.org. If you have an obituary for Beyond the Veil, training material, or past MerryMeet rituals for the website (or anything else really) please send it to cogweb@cog.org.
1. How do the Governing Board Reps learn what long-range plans to bring to National?
2. How do the Governing Board Reps communicate with their constituencies?
3. How do the Governing Board Reps make decisions with feedback from their constituencies?

Following are some initial guidelines for Communication.

Our process does not need to define HOW Reps will communicate, but these are the communication objectives:

- Governing Board Reps and Alternates will be securing ideas from their constituencies.
- Governing Board Reps and Alternates will be presenting ideas from their constituencies.
- There will be two-way communication between the Governing Board Rep and who they represent.

Governing Board Rep Communication Process Points:

A. Each Governing Board Rep and Alternate might communicate with each other PRIOR to Board Meetings –
   a. Discuss what they would like to relate to the Board. Could include (but not be limited to):
      i. Questions or concerns the constituency has about anything in COG
      ii. What activities the constituency might be involved in
      iii. What challenges the constituency may be facing

B. Each Governing Board Rep and Alternate might communicate with their constituencies PRIOR to Board Meetings [it has been suggested that receiving an early agenda will help communicate but in lieu of an early agenda, prior meeting minutes can be used as talking points with constituencies] –
   a. Secure feedback from the constituency on the following (but not be limited to):
      i. Upcoming decisions the Board must make
      ii. Challenges the Board is currently facing
      iii. The current items the Board will be meeting on
      iv. The activities the constituency wants brought to the Board meeting

C. If both did not attend the Board meeting, each Governing Board Rep and Alternate should communicate with each other AFTER Board Meetings –
   a. After the meetings, provide a summary to each other on decisions, challenges, or new items brought up on the Board meeting

D. Each Governing Board Rep and Alternate should communicate with their constituencies AFTER Board Meetings –
   a. After the meetings, provide a summary to their constituencies on decisions, challenges, or new items brought up on the Board meeting

It is important to note that the Governing Board Rep will be representing their constituency at Grand Council and must be able to speak for the majority consensus from their constituency on any issue. This is the whole purpose of the Governing Board, so that we don’t have a handful of Officers making all the decisions for COG in a vacuum without feedback or transparency.

It is understandable why some Local Councils have selected National Officers to be their Governing Board Reps, but in the future, it is hoped they select people who are not already on the Board. It defeats the purpose and objective of the Governing Board if it ends up being the Officers who are Governing. In these constituency cases where the Governing Board Rep is a National Officer too, the perception remains that COG is being governed and decisions are being made by a relative few and not the majority.

National Outreach Officer

No report given.

Welcome to CoG

Please welcome:

- Avera Vreeland, National AoIM
- Scott Lamont, International AoIM
- Aspen May, Friends of CoG
TRANSITIONING FROM COVEN TO SOLITARY

NONE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Silver Sanctuary Coven

Everglades Moon Local Council
Punta Gorda, Florida

STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

I began actively practicing as a Witch in 2009, though I had been a spiritual seeker & found the Goddess decades before. I was dedicated to the Silver Dragon Moon Coven (Georgian Tradition) in 2010 and never looked back. I have practiced as a Georgian ever since which includes (but is not limited to) following the Wiccan Rede, celebrating the Sabbats, the study & practice of magic, in addition to having a chuckle at the absurdity of life. I was officially initiated in 2011 and have recently elevated to 3rd Degree in July 2019. 10 years after dedicating to the Goddess, my practice has evolved.

Currently, I am priestess of a small coven of 3, Silver Sanctuary Coven. We gather for Sabbats and we study/connect in person & through Skype, since one of our members is an hour away from the Covenstead. In the last couple of years, we have begun attending festivals, and networking, as I have felt the call to connect (serve) the wider Pagan/Witch community. In addition to the EMLC events/meetings I have attended in 2018-2019, I also network (and attend the occasional ritual) with an outer-court grove of Crones & Celtic witches in Naples. It is through Florida Pagan Gathering festival that I met Lady Rayna Templebee & Lord Canu Nodiad. They, of course, introduced me to the EMLC community, and to my great honor, presided over my elevation. On this path, it is easy to feel isolated, solitary, but I feel a great welcoming energy in the events & meetings attended by EMLC members. It is my wish to form new links of community with others of the Pagan and Witch community, to serve and connect with a wider network of like-minded souls. I feel that I’ve found that in Everglades Moon Local Counsel and would be honored if you would include me as a member.

Thank you, Lady Tanit Heru

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:

Dear Everglades Moon Local Council Membership Officer/Lady Bridget,

It is our distinct pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Silver Sanctuary coven of Punta Gorda, Florida. We had the good fortune to meet Lady Tanit Heru at a Florida pagan festival a few years ago when our paths crossed at a workshop. We have known her High Priestess for many years and were thrilled to be invited to participate in Lady Tanit Heru’s elevation. Since then we have had the opportunity to circle with her and other members of Silver Sanctuary coven on a number of occasions, and socialize as well. They are wonderful people, deeply committed to the Craft and serving the Craft community. Their land is beautiful and we hope to be able to visit it again and perhaps hold rituals there. They will be a strong addition to Everglades Moon and the whole Covenant of the Goddess family.

Bright Blessings,
Lady Rayna Templebee & Lord Canu

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:

Dear EMLC membership officer,

I highly recommend Silver Sanctuary Coven to be moved forward in their request to become a member of Covenant of the Goddess. Silver Sanctuary was dedicated in 2015. The HPS, known in circle as Tanit, is a 3rd degree Georgian. Other members in the Coven are also Georgian. They regularly get together for Sabbats. I have had the pleasure of circling with them at public ritual and have had many discussions with Tanit and other members of the coven. They are honorable and will fit in fine with EMLC.

Namaste,
Marla K. Roberson
Elder, Georgian
EMLC, 2nd officer and Solitaire

NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES

~ April 12, 2020

Roll Call – (Quorum is two-thirds present): All National Officers present. Quorum reached. 5 of 11 Constituencies Represented by Governing Board Reps.

National Officers:
✓ First Officer – Lord Verderius
✓ Second Officer – Morgana
✓ Membership Officer – Dee P.
✓ Publications Officer – Lord Soec
✓ Pursewarden – Qabal
✓ Public Information Officer – Janine N.
✓ Outreach Officer – Brandon P.
✓ Correspondence Officer – David L.
✓ Recorder – Faelind

Governing Board Representatives:
✓ Calafia – Catherine / Alt: Karen – Catherine
  o Chamisa – Ryan C. / Alt: Tiffany B.
✓ Everglades Moon – Raven (Debby) / Alt: Lord Rieken – Lord Rieken
  o Hills & Rivers – Lady Annabelle / Alt: Jamie D.
Northern California – Macha / Alt: Deborah B. – Both Macha and Deborah present
Orange County – Janine / Alt: Morgana – Both Janine and Morgana Present
Southern California – Lady Mariah / Alt: Lisa M. – Lady Mariah
Texas – Orin / Alt: Willow McKenna – Orin
Touchstone LC – Lord Soec – Lord Soec
- National Covens – ?
- National Individual Members – ?

Officer Reports:

First Officer (Lord Verderius): (Please see full report on page 4). Lord Verderius submitted a written report and discussed how all of us are being impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic at this time. His goals include completing the process of securing Governing Board representation from National Covens and National Individual Members with a letter and zoom calls. He also expressed concern that we do not have a committee head to lead the Consent Culture Statement requested at last Grand Council.

Second Officer (Morgana): (Please see full report on page 5). Morgana submitted a written report proposing that Merry Meet be cancelled this year with Grand Council being held virtually because of the Pandemic and rescheduling Merry Meet and Grand Council 2021 during the first week of August next year.

Membership Officer (Dee): (Please see full report on page 5). Dee noted that she is caught up with membership duties but has been dealing with some loss and a lupus flare-up. She plans to continue work on tutorial videos for the Youtube channel.

Publications Officer (Lord Soec/Jack): (Please see full report on page 7). Jack began a discussion on how or whether Governing Board Rep reports should be included to the newsletters. This opened much needed discussion on what a Governing Board Rep report should and should not include and how it might be published in the newsletter. Governing Board Rep reports should not be recounting what their representative constituencies are doing, but rather items the constituency wants brought to the National level for action, discussion, or information. The Board (some reluctantly) agreed that Governing Board rep reports submitted prior to National Board meetings must be captured by the Recorder and included to the Minutes of the Board meeting where currently, the National Officer reports submitted to the newsletter are not included. It was also suggested that it might be time to look at restructuring and reconfiguring our newsletter publication to ensure they are accessible and relevant.

Pursewarden (Manny): (Please see full report on page 6). Manny submitted a written report on the finances. He added that he agreed with Morgana about cancelling Merry Meet and holding Grand Council virtually this year. The Coronavirus will not be gone, we are sheltering in place to prevent everyone from contracting the virus at the same time and overwhelming the existing health care system. At the present time there is no cure, and no end in sight.

Public Information Officer (Janine): (Please see full report on page 7). Janine added that due to events being cancelled there has not been a great deal going on. She had submitted a COG COVID-19 statement to media outlets.

Outreach Officer (Brandon): Brandon noted that due to the Pandemic, he has shifted his focus to online and has been looking at the EMLC and Texas LC websites to update the Chamisa website. He has also been working with Ardantane on their virtual class offerings which makes him think that COG should also offer classes like this using our YouTube channel, and perhaps Sabbat discussions or rituals with facebook live like Circle Sanctuary is doing on Instagram. He has lots of great ideas about doing "State of the Covenant" videos. Janine is doing a great job promoting things on facebook and Brandon thinks that things like EMLC’s COVID-19 Resource list should also be promoted on COG's website. These kinds of things show who COG is.

Correspondence Officer (David): David did follow up with the Boy Scouts and believes they are wrapped around the axle right now dealing with their bankruptcy. He has had no response. He has been working with Canu to get his access and passwords working as he was not receiving anything and wondered if he missed anything on the list.

Recorder (Faelind): (Please see full report on page 7). Faelind submitted the Governing Board Process Points to be published in the newsletter and received a great suggestion from Deborah B that she will add to the process points.

Governing Board Rep Reports:

Calafia noted that they have been fortunate in their area that with approximately 3 million people in San Diego County, they have a low COVID-19 infection and mortality rate due to Shelter-in-Place practices. The LC is doing weekly virtual check-ins with the membership for social support to stay connected and the LC sent out a packet of medicinal and herbal supplies to Pagans in the Mojave area. Members of the LC are making cloth masks as they are required to be worn even to enter grocery stores. They are working to keep each other safe and supported.

Chamisa noted to be on the lookout for the Ardantane classes that they will be promoting.
**Everglades Moon** noted that all events have been cancelled. They were due to be part of some Unitarian Universalist events. Focus has been on taking care of elderly parents and dealing with the Coronavirus.

**Northern California** noted that normally both reps would not attend the Board meetings but that they wanted to understand the process and so would both attend a couple of times to understand how to operate and to get to know everyone.

**Orange County** has cancelled their June Psychic Fair due to the Pandemic which would have helped them pay for MerryMeet.

**Southern California** had barely reorganized when the Pandemic hit and Lady Mariah thanked SCLC’s Alternate, Lisa for attending the last meeting when she was in India. She was barely able to get back to the States. The LC has many folks that are health compromised so they will not be doing anything locally.

**Texas** noted that all the public Sabbat Ritual events and public Classes have been cancelled. The First Officer reaches out to see how everyone is doing.

**Touchstone** is Sheltering-in-Place. Jack is in quarantine as he was possibly exposed and many in the LC are health compromised as well, so they are focused on staying safe.

**Call for Additions to the Agenda:** Macha agreed with the Outreach Officer’s ideas to focus on putting out online videos and suggested that CoG create an online group with discussion that is open to the public as she has seen other groups model. Groups have created online communities with Pagan authors or known Pagans presenting topics with included discussions. She is suggesting that COG produce a series that could be shared publicly. We have a chance to show who we are while people are at home right now. In addition to the new members packet, Macha would like to see the following videos on the main site: New Members; Potential Members; Individual members (or listserv, but open to ALL individual members).

Catherine brought up that new Governing Board Reps need the Board Meeting Schedule, so the schedule is included here: (all meeting times are 6:00 PM Eastern 5:00 PM Central, 4:00 PM Mountain, and 3:00 PM Pacific time unless otherwise communicated).

- Sunday, May 24
- Sunday, June 14
- Saturday, July 18
- Sunday, August 23
- Saturday, September 12
- Sunday, October 11

Newsletter deadlines for 2020:
- 4/18/20

**Old Business:**

**Webserver migration and notification to membership:** Canu reported to Lord Verderius that all the Governing Board reps have been added to the CoG Board list and the correct forums. Canu is nearly finished adding all members to the website with their own usernames and passwords and should finish up AIR soon. Setting up the National Members will be last.

Some Governing Board reps noted that they still have not received the COG Board emails so Lord Verderius will reach out to Canu to confirm.

Deborah B. suggested that we might need to provide some instructions to the membership and Dee plans to create “How To” tutorials videos for the forums and online membership usage. One must have a username and password issued by Canu before one can enter the forums or members-only side of the Website.

**Grand Council Proposal for Sexual Harassment/Consent Culture Training and Statement:** The board does not have the bandwidth at this time to take on this task and there has not been anyone come forward to lead the committee that will bring something back to Grand Council.

We know this is an important task and we ask for someone in the Covenant to lead a committee to craft both a statement and plans for training that could be brought to Grand Council for approval. If there is no one willing to step forward to take on this task, this item will not move forward.

**Should an Interfaith Representative sign onto Environmental Initiatives on behalf of COG?:** The board determined that if any such statement agrees with existing statements published by COG, then the Interfaith Rep may sign onto such a statement. The First Officer and PIO should be notified when that occurs.

Discussion included that perhaps there should be policy around this type of thing that is beyond this discussion to include the Governing Board.

**New Business:**

**Update on Grand Council/MerryMeet**

Conference schedule for this August. The Board is unanimous that we should not put the membership at risk due to the Pandemic. MerryMeet will be cancelled this year, but we will meet virtually for Grand Council. The Board will plan a Virtual Grand Council this year.
Virtual Attendance Definitions from 2019 Bylaws are included here:

VIRTUAL ATTENDEES: Members attending Grand Council through authorized electronic means will be considered physically present for the purpose of quorum, discussion of proposals, voting on the budget, and election of officers.

VOTING MEMBERS: Both Member Covens and Individual Members (formed in temporary associations known as Individual Member Caucuses) are eligible to vote at Grand Council, represented by proxy or in person, as described under Article 4. Meetings, of these Bylaws. Individual Member Caucuses, while not a category of membership, shall be considered to be Voting Members for purposes of Grand Council ONLY, and not for local council functions.

Deborah B. asked whether we could separate out Leadership Institute and hold it anyway. Macha noted that Leadership Institute might be offered by COG at any time. There was discussion about what might be offered instead of what had been planned and further discussions will occur to help plan for a virtual Leadership Institute. Lady Mariah suggested we record any Leadership Institute offerings for our YouTube channel.

Manny asked if we use a Zoom platform, do we know if it will handle 200 people and how we might manage the process? Lord Verderius will investigate the package he purchased and report on what its capabilities are to ensure it will be adequate. Academia uses a platform that allows for management of attendees that we may look at.

The board will finalize plans and procedures in upcoming meetings.

Meeting Adjourned:

Lord Verderius reminded all the Officers to get their reports to Publications before the newsletter deadline for Beltane.

LOCAL COUNCILS

**CALAFIA**

~ No Report ~

Last published minutes Ostara 2020 edition.

**CHAMISA**

~ No Report ~

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2019 edition.

**EVERGLADES MOON**

~ March 28, 2020

In attendance: Canu, Rayna, Raven, Alpandia, Kasha, Marla, Ceos, Lady Bridget, Manny, Aequitas. Guests: Tanit, Bobbi Jo and Dennis Smith

Officer Reports:

First Officer: It’s been quiet, we will be meeting virtually until public health people give ok, Kasha has a paid zoom account available for EMLC member use—rituals, workshops, hang out space.

Second Officer: Annual meeting at Fern House last year, will be there again this year, the dates are Sept 25-26, 2020. The official annual meeting will be Sat afternoon, otherwise commune with nature, maybe do one crafting project. Gypsey is building a flush toilet and so they will charge $10/person to be paid by EMLC. Other costs such as food, etc to be discussed at a later meeting. Fern House provides primitive camping or there is a new hotel in Callahan!

Membership Officer: We had four members due to renew at Imbolc, and all of them did so, thank you! We only have one member due to renew at Ostara, and that's my coven, and we did renew. We have three members due to renew at Beltane: Lord Gwydion, Beachfyre Coven, and Kasha. I'm sure that Dee will be sending out your forms soon, so this is just a heads up.

Local council tithes were due at Imbolc, but we still have 3 members who have not yet sent those in (update—down to only 1 member). I have contacted each of them, and will continue to follow up. Remember there are Grace of the Goddess funds available if you are having financial issues, but you do need to contact me.

I am pleased to announce that we have a new membership application from Silver Sanctuary Coven who are located in Punta Gorda, FL. I have previously sent their Statement of Practice and their two letters of recommendation to the members only list, and I have their Statement of Practice to read to you. Their two letters of recommendation are from Beachfyre Coven and from Marla Roberson, which will also be read into the minutes.

We have also had inquiries into membership from a few other people, and I have invited them to participate virtually in the meeting today. Some of them are with us on the zoom call—Bobbi Jo and Dennis of Albion’s SWORD (what is their coven name?)

We are very blessed to have 17 members in our local council, 5 covens and 12 individual members.
In other news, in February our podcast had 1000 downloads! Outstanding! And thank you to all who participate - either by sending in items to air, or by downloading and subscribing! We are always looking for more material for the podcast.

**Publications Officer:** All quiet here. Email is flowing, the website is up, and our socials are being social. Our website is up-to-date and features the latest episode of our podcast (which is also humming along in the time of Covid-19). Now would be a great time since many of us are working from home or at least home-bound in some way to think about what you could contribute to a future episode! It can be anything: poetry, music, a short story, a new chant, an invocation, walk-through of a recipe, book review, movie review (omg have you watched Motherland yet? record your review!), or anything. Please feel free to contribute anything you’d like -- even if someone else "usually" does it for the podcast, we welcome all voices (especially if you have an awesome project - I want you to teach me how to do it!). You can record it using the voice memo feature on your phone and email it to Lady B (that's usually what I do) -- so no special equipment is needed.

**Public Information Officer:** no report

**Pursewarden:** This quarter has been much quieter than the last one. The main activities have been finishing up the final accounting for Turning the Tide and keeping track of local council tithes as they are due every year at Imbolc. I’ve been working closely with our membership officer on that. And we know we need a new local council tithe form, where the data can be updated each year... we just didn’t quite get that done in time for 2020. Many members donated additional funds over the annual tithe (10 for solitaries and 25 for covers) to support one of our three EMLC Special Funds:

- Circe's Veil - to collect and provide end of life planning tools for the website and for pagan pride day events
- Fyredancer fund - to assist in sending our reps to GC
- Grace of the Goddess fund - to assist EMLC members who can't pay their tithe or renewals due to financial difficulties

The balance of those funds after these recent donations is: Circe's Veil=$600., Fyredancer Fund=$135., Grace of the Goddess=$200.

The quarterly report was filed with national in February, and the next one is due in May. Our current balance in the checking account is $6114.76 and we have $3249.56 in our Paypal account, for a total of $9364.32 in available funds, which is $235.46 more than at last report. Our annual philanthropic sponsorships of the Turtle Hospital, scrub Jay, and Panther Refuge are due over the summer so that will draw down the balance a bit. Please suggest other places we can use EMLC funds to make a difference!

**Recorder:** last minutes will appear in newsletter, Rayna took minute today as we are rotating the Recorder position this year.

**Old Business**

**Canu** is putting tons of work into migrating the old CoG email lists to new forums—he has to manually add each person to a forum and there are many forums. He explained this process to our guests. Twinkles for taking this on, Canu.

**The fourth blanket** we charged with healing energy at Turning the Tide 2019 was sent to Diana of Spiraling Heart Coven in Tallahassee, she is recovering from surgery and loved it!

**Debby** continues to foster cats and kittens, this has been made more complicated by the stay at home orders

**Tides:** We are still getting the run around from the park about signing a contract for 2020. Joseph will continue to pursue with the hope that they will be very anxious to have clients once the plague passes.

**Fundraising and Outreach:** CoG will have a suite at Mystic South, there are only 3 in the new hotel, Manny will have a Wild Hunt suite... EMLC had said we would help support a TWH suite, Manny suggests we wait to hear more from national about their plans before EMLC commits finances. Marla and Pandie gave a thorough pitch for Mystic South!

**Summer Pagans Night Out** tabled until we can all go out

**Future meetings**—April 25, June 6, July 25, annual meeting Sept 26, Oct 25th. Even when we start meeting in person again we will always have zoom attendance options.

**New Business:**

**We discussed ideas** for a healing ritual for Diana, including all of us charging water leading up to full moon, Diana charges a crystal she will send to me to bury where she doesn't know its location. Rayna will follow up with Diana.

**Sirona got married** on St. Patrick’s Day!

**We brainstormed ideas** for online projects of service to the community right now—discussions, workshops, etc via Zoom... Ceos says being connected to self and present is most important way to deal with fear...Manny says see his opinion piece in TWH, rise in evangelism and scapegoating so we need to be vigilant about protecting our community.

We could schedule Zoom hangout to discuss Manny’s editorial, witchy stuff in pop culture, pagan beekeeping, astrology, bread baking...
suggests we gather info about where to donate masks and other crafty items that people could make, turn it into a resource page on EMLC website. All twinkled and Alpandia will start crafting it—send her your resources!

A reminder to be nice to your service worker employees who are still on the job and dealing with a stressed out population.

**EMLC only discussion:** We thanked our guests for attending and opened a discussion on Silver Sanctuary’s application for membership. MO led a discussion of Tanit’s statement and letters for Silver Sanctuary coven, discussion, no concerns about the application so materials will be sent to National. Discussion of other people who have expressed interest in membership that Lady B invited to this meeting… no objections to following up with Dennis and Bobbi Jo’s interest in membership

**HILLS AND RIVERS**

~ No Report~

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2018 edition.

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

~ No Report~

Last published minutes in the Samhain 2019 edition.

**ORANGE COUNTY**

~ No Report~

Last published minutes in the Mabon 2019 edition.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

~ No Report~

Last published minutes in the Imbolc 2020 edition.

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**TEXAS LOCAL COUNCIL**

~ April 26, 2020

X = present  P = Proxy  A = Absent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covens</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Circle of Danu: Bonnie &amp; Jason</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Circle of Earth, Sea, and Sky: Delfin</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Circle of the Star: Rae, December &amp; Devlin</td>
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<td>X Circle of the Unicorn: Chuck</td>
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<td>A Circle of Shadow and Light</td>
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<td>X Circle of the Wild Wood: Breila</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Circle of the Blood Moon: Christal</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Coven Firemoon: Bastion, Micheal &amp; Essence</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Circle of the Moon and Sun: Ruby &amp; Dragan</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Tree of Knowledge Coven: Faelind</td>
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<td>X Circle of the Serpent: Gaelen</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Coven of Diana’s Moon</td>
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**Individual Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anastasia</th>
<th>Dallas, TX</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debi</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
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<td>Glenda P.</td>
<td>Alvarado, TX</td>
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<td>Q’est</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
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**Quorum** determined by Gaelen after taking roll

**Officer Reports**

**First Officer (Gaelen):** Where We Are: Glad to see so much could make it today in these difficult times and hope you are all staying safe and well. Thank you for trying out this new online forum with us in Google Meet.

Future session and classes: We are still just taking it one day at a time and will let everyone know as soon as we know when things will start up again. It has been mentioned to have classes online and will be discussed during new business.

Recorder position open – Ruby has offered to step in and take on the recorder role. We will vote in new business. Today she is taking our minutes.
Public Information Officers: Willow M. is absent. Social Media Update – Gaelen reaching out to Willow

Pursewarden (Michael):
Bank Balance: $3169.49
PayPal Balance: $1371.33
Cash App Balance: $73.00
Cash: $50
Total Balance: $4663.82

Imbolc:
- Donations: $320
- To CCDs: $160
- To TXCOG: $160

Membership Officer (Dragan): Coven of Diana’s Moon is 3/21. Dragan did not renew as a Solitaire at Imbolc he is now a part of Circle of the Moon and Sun.

Recorder (Ruby filling in): We will check and see if the Beltane deadline is still open and will get the minutes in if possible

Wicca 101 Classes - Arlington (Bastion): They had just started their new series in March and had only 1 or 2 classes, so when everything gets going again, they will start again at the beginning.

Addison Class Report (Faelind): We have not held class since Dallas County declared “Shelter-in-place” order. We have $175.00 in our class fund and paid for a class we didn’t get to hold. We have not paid for any class times we are not using. I am concerned that Ananda Dallas may not survive the pandemic we are going through. They were struggling before this all started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CGO 2020 Pagan 101 Class Schedule and Donations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spellwork 101 - Gaelen (Circle of the Serpent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throwing the Bones - December (Circle of the Star)</td>
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<td>What Is Wicca - Faelind (Tree of Knowledge Coven)</td>
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<td>Witchcraft - Gardan (Circle of the Serpent)</td>
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<td>The Goddess and Sun - Ash (Circle of the Circle)</td>
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<td>Circle &amp; Sacred Space - Willow (Circle of the Wild Wood)</td>
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<td>Color &amp; Candle Magic - Kael (Senior Fireside)</td>
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<td>Water Magic - Lex (Willow Wisdom)</td>
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<td>Spirituality - Herbcraft (Circle of Earth, Sea, Sun)</td>
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<td>Crystals and Stones - Connor (Circle of the Star)</td>
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<td>Elements - Fire (Dragan Clan Tradition)</td>
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<td>The Moon &amp; Moon Magic - Gardan (Circle of the Wild Wood)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritual - Faelind (Tree of Knowledge Coven)</td>
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<td>Wheels of the Year - Ash (Circle of the Wild Wood)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritual Level 1 Part 2 - Akkaah (Circle of the Serpent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritual Level 2 Part 1 - Akkaah (Circle of the Serpent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Druid &amp; Aromatherapy - December (Circle of the Star)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleansing - Gaian (Circle of the Serpent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sprit Guides - Kael (Senior Fireside)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Sun and Solar Cycle - Al (Circle of the Star)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Magic - Faelind (Tree of Knowledge Coven)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO CLASS FOR THE HOLIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration - New Year (Circle)</td>
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<td>NO CLASS FOR THE HOLIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summer Series Development &amp; Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Totaal: $216.00</td>
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Webweaver (Faelind): G Suite: Going to talk about the new website in New Business.

The post that Gaelen wrote about Covid 19 is on our front web page, our class page and our sabbath page. The etiquette information for CCDS has also been posted to the website.

Sabbats (Gaelen):
- February 2 – Imbolc – Circle of the Blood Moon – wonderful heathen rite!
- March 22 - Spring Equinox – Sunna’s Dance Cancelled due to Covid 19
- May 3 – Beltane – Circle of Danu Cancelled due to Covid 19
- June 20 - Summer Solstice - Tree of Knowledge – Wait and See

We will most likely cancel midsummer. Faelind said her coven does not want to do the rite due to Covid 19 concerns.

Microphone and speakers have been purchased. They haven’t been tested yet but will be before they are needed at the next Sabbat.

Packing (Dragan): Signs finished – signs are made, they are larger than the others, they are a bright red, they will be easily taken apart for transporting, and are free standing when put together.

Overflow parking at the park and the government building have been posted on website.

Youth Activities/Moon School: Micheal purchased the table and have it.

Marketing (Bastion): Flyers in shops were put out but will need to be updated once things are up and running again.

Copies for CCDS are ready to go but will be updated.

Texas Governing Board Rep (Jason):
The yearly Merry Meet has been cancelled for this year, but they will be doing a virtual Grand Council. The website has been updated and everyone should have gotten an email from Canu to go in and reset passwords and join the forums. There is also a TXCOG Forum if we want to use it. National is asking if anyone interested is in chairing a National Committee to develop a Harassment/Consent Culture policy. Jason will begin posting the minutes from his national meetings monthly and asking for input from the local council prior to meetings.

Old Business

2020 Witches Ball (10/24/2020): The UU is not confirmed yet, but Bonnie will check it out this week. She will also confirm and report what the UU church’s cancellation policy is.
New Business

**Recorder position:** Ruby has volunteered to do the Recorder position, there was discussion and asked if there were any others that would want to take the position. No one else spoke up, there was a vote and Ruby was voted as the new Recorder.

**Website:** May 1st will be the first time for a charge from G Suite if there is a cost after receiving verification that we are a non-profit. There was a $3 charge in April. There is an Officers Group, Members Group, and an Activities Group. Any type of email address can be a part of our Google groups. As discussed in October, members need a Gmail address to access the folders.

Goal is to get rid of Yahoo Groups once the G Suite Groups are completely up and running smoothly. Gaelen and Faelind are meeting this week so Gaelen can show Faelind how to set up Google groups’ details. Once groups are up and running, Faelind will start building the Google based website for www.txcog.org. Gaelen offered to help her learn Google Sites when she is ready.

**Online Classes:** Anastasia and Rae are willing to help with holding online classes as well as others. Bastion/Ruby and Faelind/Breila are willing to help with making these classes happen.

Discussion was of only doing one series instead of two. Thoughts, we have classes on Monday’s and Wednesday’s for two locations, but do we have enough teachers for both days we asked. Concerns about video recordings was discussed. Christal offered the idea the anyone concerned about video recordings could teach a class and not turn on their video. Bastion and Faelind will get together and discuss details on Monday for online classes and get them set up.

Gaelen thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to continue to stay safe. Bastion reported the challenges going at local hospitals. Gaelen encouraged everyone to reach out to those they know who may be alone and struggling during this time and said that if any of us were struggling, to please reach out. We're all here for each other.

**Adjourned** at 11:21am

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**HOW TO HOLD A GROUP RITUAL ONLINE**

By Brandy Williams

We can’t always meet in person. Your coven, grove or lodge might decide to cancel your next get-together to maintain social separation to slow the spread of coronavirus, or a group member may be travelling but still want to participate. When the group can’t get together physically, can you still meet? With today’s video conferencing technology it’s easier than ever to connect online. Here’s how to hold a group ritual where some or all of the members dial in.

**Pick a conferencing system**

Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts and Facebook Messenger all offer group video chats. During the coronavirus crisis their terms of service are shifting and some are expanding their free offerings.

For video conferencing, connectivity may be an issue. If the signal is lower quality for any individual person they can join with audio only and still participate.

**Pick a coordinator**

The first time the group meets it’s helpful to have just one coordinator. That person is responsible for organizing the meeting date and time, managing the technology, and coordinating communication during the video conference.

The coordinator can be the ritual leader but doesn’t have to be. The ritual leader can run the circle while the coordinator provides tech support.

**Get the software**

The coordinator should send out a link to the software along with the meeting invitation. Before the meeting members should download the software and test it. That said, there’s always someone who postpones this to the last minute and then hits a technical glitch. The savvy coordinator builds in a ten-minute buffer at the beginning of the meeting to solve everyone’s technical issues.
Adapt the Ritual

Whatever ritual the group uses will need to be amended for the video conference format. One ritual writer might be responsible for the rite, or the group might make joint decisions about what to do. The coordinator will need to circulate the amended ritual to the group before the conference.

One of the big differences between an in-person meeting and a virtual meeting is the technical lag time. Two people speaking at once may be heard at the same time or may be staggered from one another. There's also the possibility of feedback. To accommodate these limitations it is a best practice for only one person to talk at a time. If several people are in the same room using one connection, that group of people can talk or chant together when it is their turn. Everyone who is not talking should be on mute.

This means that group speeches need to be reassigned to single speakers. They can be shared out in any way that makes sense to the group. For example, to call the quarters, one person can call air, a second person fire, a third person water and a fourth person earth. Alternatively, one person can be responsible for reading all the invocations.

Establish the Astral Temple

To connect members who are physically separated, the group will need to create or reinforce an astral temple. Here are some ideas:

- A circular clearing in a grove of ancient trees
- An open-air temple of white marble pillars with a white marble floor
- An island in the center of a deep blue lake

Before the conference the ritual leader should visualize the temple and set it up for the group. Every group member can also visit the temple and put energy into sustaining it.

Set Up Individual Altars

Every member of the group can set up a personal altar for the ritual. Any small table or even a corner of a desk will do. The altar can have:

- An altar cloth
- A small bowl of water
- A small bowl of salt
- An incense holder with a stick or cone of incense
- Any deity images appropriate to the ritual
- Seasonal items, like flowers or leaves, appropriate to the ritual
- Ritual food, such as wine and cakes
- The computer or phone can be on the altar or next to it.

When the group meets physically the group casts a circle in a single room. With a video ritual each member casts the circle in their own room using the tools on their altar. At the same time each member participates in the astral temple where the group is collectively calling quarters and casting the circle. Here’s one way to think about it: the individual circles are all gates to the astral temple where everyone is meeting.

Launch and Manage the Conference

It’s a best practice for the coordinator to launch the meeting a few minutes early. When everyone joins, and any glitches have been worked out, the ritual can get started. The group can take a moment to visualize the astral temple before starting on the invocations and physical actions. While the ritual proceeds the coordinator can monitor the chat for questions and troubleshoot any technical issues that crop up. The ritual leader or the coordinator can keep the ritual moving, calling on people when it is their turn to talk.

The group may decide to have social time before or after the ritual itself. In that case the coordinator can act as host, keeping the conversation moving, and making sure to start the ritual starts and ends gracefully.

Coordinator Check List

Here’s a check list for the coordinator:

Before the meeting

- Download the software and test it.
- Set date and time.
- Send out notices. Include link to download software.
- Send out ritual. Record role assignments.

During the meeting

- Launch the conference.
- Troubleshoot technical issues.
- Turn over to the ritual leader (if it’s not you) to keep the ritual on track.
- Close the ritual and thank everyone.
- Close the conference.

After the meeting

- Collect notes from the group about what worked, what didn’t, and what you’d like to try next.
- Make any revisions to the ritual that the group decides. The ritual leader may take on this task and issue an updated ritual for use next time.

Ritual Outline

Here’s an outline for a video conference ritual. It’s perfectly workable and I encourage you to try it out! You can also use it as inspiration for adapting or writing your own ritual.

Settle in. Make sure everyone is connected to the conference, has the ritual handy, and has collected the tools they need.

Come together. Ground and center by taking deep breaths and feeling into the earth.
Join the astral temple. The ritual leader can read a description of the astral temple. Every member takes a few minutes to see and feel the temple.

Purify the temple. The speaker says “Salt join water.” Everyone sprinkles a bit of salt into their water bowl. The speaker says “Water and earth, let this place be cleansed and purified for our purpose.” Everyone member sprinkles a little water and salt in their own physical space, and sees and feels water sprinkled in the astral temple.

Consecrate the temple. The speaker says “Fire join air.” Everyone lights their stick or cone of incense. The speaker says “Fire and air, let this temple be consecrated to our purpose.” Everyone waves the incense in their room.

Call air. The speaker says, “Power of air, join our circle.” Everyone bows to the east.

Call fire. The speaker says, “Power of fire, join our circle.” Everyone bows to the south.

Call water. The speaker says, “Power of water, join our circle.” Everyone bows to the west.

Call earth. The speaker says, “Power of earth, join our circle.” Everyone bows to the north.

Cast the circle. The speaker says, “The circle is cast by each of us and opens into our temple.” Everyone gestures a circle in their own room, then takes a moment to visualize and feel the astral temple.

Call deity. The speaker says, “Lady of the moon, Lord of the forest, join our circle.” The ritual leader may insert any deity invocation the group uses.

Speak wishes. Each member may speak in turn, asking for what they wish from the circle, and also speaking any wishes the group has been asked to support.

Raise energy. The ritual leader may lead a silent meditation. The leader may also chant or play music while members dance or spin in their own personal space. The leader calls when the energy has been raised and sent to support the wishes, for example by shouting, “It is done!”

Ritual food. Each member eats the food on their individual altar. This is a good time to unmuted everyone and let the sounds in all the individual spaces bring everyone together.

Thank deity. The speaker says, “Lady of the moon, Lord of the forest, thank you for your presence.”

Thank air. The speaker says, “Power of air, thank you for joining our circle.”

Thank fire. The speaker says, “Power of fire, thank you for joining our circle.”

Thank water. The speaker says, “Power of water, thank you for joining our circle.”

Thank earth. The speaker says, “Power of earth, thank you for joining our circle.”

Close the circle. The speaker says, “The gates close but the temple remains. The circle is open but unbroken. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.”

The circles cast in the individual rooms have closed but the astral temple remains. Any member can visit at any time to do individual work and to reinforce the group energy.

GETTING COMFORTABLE ONLINE

I have experienced teaching and empowerments online for several years. It is perfectly possible to have magical experiences and form deep connections using video technology combined with the magical technology of the astral temple.

If your group has only met in person it may take a few sessions to get comfortable with this new way of meeting. Some of the group might get silly and make faces at the camera, or complain about the stiffness of the communication, or actively grieve for the loss of physical touch. If you're used to sharing hugs you're going to miss that.

On the other hand the technology makes it possible for the group to get together when it's not prudent or possible to meet in person. That's a great blessing. Learning how to hold a ritual online builds resilience for the whole group.

Blast from the Past

YOUR OWN MOTHER IS ALSO THE GODDESS

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By Link

When you look into the eyes of your own mother (the woman who gave physical birth to you, raised you, fed you, reminded you to wash behind your ears) do you see an image of the Goddess? You should.

We often talk about the Goddess in vague, abstract terms. We may give Her a name taken from the pantheons of Old, or maybe assign Her special qualities, colors and symbols. While this is fine, we shouldn't limit our view of Her to only the abstract. Perhaps we can see Her in parts of our everyday lives. Perhaps our first encounter with the Goddess is indeed our own mother.

Of course, in every family, with every child, this relationship is different for each of us. Isn't the
same true for our relationship with the Goddess? We each experience Her in different ways. And this often changes over the years. That same woman who nurtured you when you were young might seem like your best friend when you are an adult! You might enjoy the same movies, laugh at the same jokes, and have much in common. In time, as she grows older, she may someday depend on you to "nurture" and care for her. The roles sometime come full circle. And as you treat her, you also treat Her.

Have you ever looked at greeting cards designed for mothers? (You know, the mushy floral ones.) Read the words carefully. You'll find phrases about the one who gives "everlasting love" or "the one who is always there" or special thanks for "the countless gifts she gives." You may find words just as beautiful and sincere as any ritual prayer for the Goddess.

Look for your own way to make Mother's Day (and Father's Day too) a special spoke in your own personal Wheel of the Year. See the time you spend with your mother as the most tangible Esbat you could ever have. See her as your own personal Mother Goddess, your nearest link in the divine chain of events that gave you life. We often give credit and thanks to our Mother Earth, but we often forget the specific way in which the Earth gave us life. For me, this was a kind-hearted woman, with beautiful green eyes, who married a man she met at a small-town roller skating rink. Together, they became my gateway into the world.

**Reflections of a Goddess**

*Vol 35 Issue-4 Beltane 2010*  
By Shoshona

I did not know where to begin this journey. I had such an array of wonderful, exciting and amazing Goddesses to choose from. I could have chosen Diana, Queen of the open sky, bestower of sovereignty and granter of conception, or the Mortal sister of the three Gorgons, Medusa, with legend that says the once beautiful woman took the mighty Sea-God as her lover and there suffered the wrath of Athena and was turned into a Gorgon, head full of snakes and a face and stare so petrifying it would turn men to stone. I could have written about Heket, the Egyptian frog-headed goddess, the "great magician" of Egypt, who was midwife at the birth of the sun, she who gave life to all and at the original creation, touched the lifeless humans with the Ankh, causing them to breathe and move. There is the lustful Scandinavian mistress of all the Gods, Freya, rouser of death, Leader of the Valkyries, war’s corpse-maidens, whose name was given to our day of the week: Friday. There is Pallor, the Roman Goddess of fear. Or what of Brigid, Goddess of Goldsmithing, Maat, the Egyptian Goddess of Truth... I could go on, but I am still left with a choice of whom to share with you. What goddess interests me most that I write of her?

I will tell you. I’ll show you. Come with me, close your eyes, and find your inner sanctum, your souls self which only you can know. There you will find a glassy pool. Look into that pool. What do you see? I see a goddess, one of great beauty and strength, infinite wisdom and compassion. Look harder and you will see a goddess of anger, fear, justice, and truth and of vengeance. Look longer and deeper into that pool, and see a goddess of love, of passion, of sexuality. See the goddess that looks back at you. What is her name? Hekate, Diana, Isis, Demeter, Hera, Aphrodite, Medusa. Look, look deep within that face and tell me her name. I see my inner soul, I see the pool, and I see the goddess who looks back at me. I know her name. Her name is Shoshona.

Remember your Goddess within. She has your name; she has your face, your heart and soul. She has your strength, your fear, your love and anger, she has all of you, and you have all of her.

YOU are Goddess. Male or female, YOU are Goddess. YOU have worth and value. YOU have meaning and divinity. As you worship Goddess in her many forms, remember the most important Goddess of all, and care for her, love her, respect her, honor her, be patient with her, do not anger her, do not hurt her or allow her to be hurt. Feed and nourish her. The most important Goddess of all is YOU, she is me, and she is all of us.

Open your eyes now, look around you, and see the Goddess within all. See the Goddess in the world around you, and remember who she is.